
Blanks are provided in case I've forgotten a few
little things. Please feel free to fill them in.
You see, it still doesn't run to more than a
page or two. It won't be long now.

-- Phyllis Onstott Arone

Wake

Because he had lived, for years, on the vague
Periphery of their close but scattered lives
Who gather to mourn this dim untimely day,

They thought of him always gowned in hospital white,
Cutting past muscles into the thick of sickness,
Improving human meat with a cold knife.

They had forgotten the Doctor's rag-time wit,
The way his elephant's ass could blunder through sexy
Minuets and bring on belly hugging fits

That left them weak. But now a sly bequest
Emanates from his famous deadpan, poised
Among flowers, looking as though it must soon infect

The room with snorts and giggles. Nicknames he coined
Are returned to currency as family treasures
And laughter cascades brightly as champagne
Over antiseptic odors, mountainous clay.

-- George Amabile

Rome, Italy